

February 17, 2022
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
State Department of Education Budget

TESTIMONY from Timothy Sullivan, Superintendent of CREC Magnet Schools

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Tim Sullivan and I am the Superintendent of the CREC Magnet Schools. We educate 8,500 students from 77 towns in our 18 schools and programs. CREC has a long tradition of offering a quality integrated education to our students, preparing them to live in a more integrated and complex world. Every year, we have a wait list of students who would like to attend CREC, and despite the pandemic, we have continued on that mission.

The introduction of ARPA/ESSER funds, the new Sheff settlement and last year's actions by the General Assembly have strengthened the financial outlook for many districts across CT, and CREC has received some of these funds. While we are thankful for efforts on our behalf, it has not changed the fundamental financial outlook for our magnet schools, which relies on the statutory appropriation given to us. That amount currently stands at \$10,652 per pupil and has gone virtually unchanged for 11 years. Proposals to reform K-12 education funding have been unable to include a long term solution for magnet schools. The only relief option left for us is YOU. We need you to increase the line item in the State Department of Education budget and change the statutory language for magnet funding and to increase it by 8%.

The funding of magnet schools is often characterized as overly complex, and attempts to fix it end in frustration and avoidance. As the recent OFA report on SB 948 highlighted, magnet schools have a structural long term sustainability problem - the only one who can fix it, is you.

When we started CREC magnet schools, the SDE was paying 75% of the operating cost and it now down to 55%. Districts like East Hartford and New Britain which already struggle for dollars are now being forced to pay an even bigger tuition bill, because this body has not stepped up and offered adequate funding. When we ask for relief, we are told to raise tuition to the sending towns. This has to stop. It is time for the elected officials in this state to take a stance.

What is at stake is not less than the future of our society. If children are not given the choice to attend a quality integrated school, we run the risk of adding to the already unacceptable gaps that exist between communities. Magnet schools help close those gaps and offer families the opportunity to live in a different Connecticut. A Connecticut where your race and zip code do not predetermine your outcome. A Connecticut where fear and stereotypes no longer force well intentioned people to isolate and exclude. Funding magnet schools properly can keep the dreams of an integrated society alive and give our future leaders a chance to understand the power of inclusion and integration.

CREC MAGNET SCHOOLS

Tim Sullivan

Superintendent of Schools

I respectfully ask that you assert yourselves and fix a long standing problem that directly impacts the lives of students who live across this state. Students who want to exert choice so they can expand their thinking beyond their local town. Students who want to live in a society where everyone is accepted and welcomed. Students who want an education that holds high expectations for every child, not just the ones whose parents have a voice.

Fixing the problems in education can seem overwhelming and could force us to give up and quit. Don't quit on the 8,500 students in our school district. Give us a chance. Give us the funding we need to operate. Let us stay open and do what we do better than anyone else. Bring people together.

For more information: [CREC Legislative Priorities 2022](#)

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Sincerely,



Timothy J. Sullivan, Jr.

Superintendent of CREC Magnet Schools